Miscellaneous Item
No. 253

No 3

THOUGHTS

ON OUR

ARTICLES OF RELIGION,

WITH RESPECT TO THEIR

Supposed UTILITY to the STATE.

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THOUGHTS

ON OUR

Articles *of* Religion.

A Sincere concern for Religion is not the character of the preſent Age; and unpromiſing as the general aſpect of the times may be, the perſons who ſolicit a removal of our religious grievances will probably find that particular diſadvantage the greateſt obſtacle to their ſucceſs. But there was little reaſon to hope the age would improve in that reſpect, if they continued ſilent; ſince the defects in our eſtabliſhed ſyſtem which occaſion their complaint, are perhaps a principal cauſe of that indifference. And although the diſpo-

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ſition of the nation may be yet too unconcerned for Religion, to enter ſeriouſly on the buſineſs of Reformation, it is however too candid and liberal to permit Perſecution. Encouraged by this equitable ſpirit of Toleration, the petitioning Clergy may ſafely proſecute their deſign. Their firſt application has brought an important queſtion back to the notice and converſation of the public; and ſhould the juſtice of their plea be over-powered again by the maxims of a miſtaken policy, their honeſt endeavours in the cauſe of Chriſtian Truth cannot be wholly unſucceſsful. Reaſon firmly and decently ſupported, muſt finally prevail; and though the preſent Reformers may ſtill be repulſed, yet their defeat itſelf will prepare the minds of their countrymen for that complete Reformation, which ſooner or later muſt take place.

THE ſubject of their complaint is not a veſtment, or a trifling ceremony of the Church; it is a Diſpute worthy the attention of a wiſe man. Whether the impoſition of human Articles of Faith be not inconſiſtent with the Divinity of our Religion, and contradictory to the principles of the Reformation? whether the doctrines contained in our articular ſyſtem be not in many inſtances falſe, and prejudicial to Morality and true Religion? whether the requiſition of Subſcription be not productive of inſincere evaſions that tend to deſtroy the credit of the ſacerdotal order, on whoſe reputation of probity their public utility depends? theſe are queſtions the affirmative ſide of which has been maintained at leaſt with an appearance of truth and reaſon. Theſe are queſtions of great and national concern; by the deciſion of which the welfare of Society, and the honour of Chriſtianity muſt be materially

materially affected. And if in the farther profecution of this debate, the juſtice of any of theſe allegations ſhould be proved to the ſatisfaction of ſerious and impartial men, the zeal of the Reforming Clergy muſt appear not only juſtifiable but laudable.

But the importance of the controverſy, the zealot's conſtant apology for his want of candour and charity, is here inſiſted on with a different view. The more important the ſubject is, a calm and candid diſcuſſion of it is for that very reaſon more indiſpenſable. In theological diſputes, the paſſions are too apt to riſe, and to mingle ſatirical invective with ſerious argumentation; that bitter leaven ſoon ſpreads a fermentation throughout the maſs; and thus the whole controverſy degenerates into perſonal altercation. It is on all ſides neceſſary therefore, ſtrictly to obſerve the rules of candour, and to remember, that incivility and ſarcaſtic ſeverity may provoke, but they can never convince. But it more eſpecially behoves them who plead the cauſe of truth againſt long-eſtabliſhed error, by a modeſt and inoffenſive, though firm and manly tone of expoſtulation, to ſecure a patient if not a favourable hearing. Whatever the conduct of their adverſaries may be, it is devoutly to be wiſhed, that nothing uncandid may fall from the Advocates of Chriſtian Liberty; who plead for the Reunion of Proteſtants on the principles of mutual forbearance, and a candid indulgence to the various interpretations of Scripture.

In matters neceſſary to ſalvation the Goſpel is written with the utmoſt clearneſs and ſimplicity; and no ſincere inquirer of common underſtanding can miſtake the eſſential truths and duties

ties of our Religion. If matters of leſs moment be more doubtfully expreſſed, difference of opinion is unavoidable. But Chriſtians have long lain too great a ſtreſs on theſe diſputable doctrines; which inſtead of being made articles of Faith and Teſts of Orthodoxy, ſhould rather be conſidered as trials of our Chriſtian temper, and occaſions to exerciſe mutual charity and forbearance. It is uſually confeſſed by Proteſtants at leaſt, that Salvation is attainable in all the various ſects of Chriſtianity. The fierce conteſts then which have divided the Chriſtian Church for many ages are altogether unjuſtifiable; and 'till we have learnt to bear uneſſential errors without a breach of charity or communion, the Goſpel can never have it's full influence on the minds of men.

THE moſt elaborate defences of our eſtabliſhment only confirm this plain reaſoning; becauſe they expoſe the palpable inconſiſtences into which the acuteſt writers on the ſubject are betrayed by the infirmity of their cauſe. For if the eſſential truths of Chriſtianity be not clearly defined in Scripture, if human wiſdom muſt correct and improve the written Rule of Faith, if the Bible be ſo obſcure and indeterminate, * that *Subſcription to it is abſolutely nothing*; by what medium, yet undiſcovered, ſhall we prove the Divinity of our Religion? But in the heat of diſputation, the conſequences of that unwary expreſſion, extorted as it were by the preſſing neceſſities of the argument, might eſcape the accurate writer's obſervation. Should he turn his great abilities to erect a defence of our common Chriſtianity, there is not a doubt, but that diſ-

* See a Charge by the Reverend Dr. Balguy.

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paraging account of Scripture would be retracted. Truth and good Logic would oblige him to maintain with his preſent adverſaries that all the important Articles of our Religion are expreſſed in the Bible in terms as plain and determinate as human Language affords. But then it would evidently follow, that explanatory Teſts, or human emendations of the Scriptural Rule of Faith are neither neceſſary, nor honourable to our Religion.

AGAIN, if the impoſition of explanatory Teſts of Faith be within the province of human authority, as clearly as the regulation of the time and place of public worſhip, ‡ and if *what is once eſtabliſhed muſt be obeyed*, by what ſurpriſing effort of invention will the moſt able apologiſt of our Church defend the Reformation, or the propagation of Chriſtianity itſelf? The Traditions of Popery were eſtabliſhed here, and the phariſaical Traditions in Judea. On theſe principles, obedience was certainly due to each eſtabliſhment. But on their own ſolid principles of the Sufficiency of Scripture, and the Right of private Judgment, the primitive Chriſtians and the firſt Reformers found it no difficult taſk to juſtify their departure from Judaiſm and Popery. And it would have been happy for the Chriſtian Church, had they acted in conſtant conformity to thoſe principles; had they never preſumed to exerciſe an illegitimate authority over doubtful ſpeculations, and harmleſs modes of Faith. But imperfection is the common lot of humanity; and zeal for truth with an equitable indulgence to error are virtues rarely found together.

‡ See a Conſecration Sermon by Dr. Balguy.

A zealous oppoſition to Popery, and a concern for their own reputation prompted our reformers to compile the Articles. But they might have truſted to time, and the general tenor of their writings to confute the calumnies of their antagoniſts. The intruſion of Popiſh Prieſts, had it been likely, might have been prevented by requiring an acknowledgement of the Right of private judgement, and of the Bible as the *only* Rule of Chriſtian Faith and Practice. And ſince their averſion from the errors of Popery was ſufficiently known, it was needleſs to publiſh it, and unwiſe to publiſh it at the expence of their conſiſtence. By impoſing their ſyſtem as a perpetual ſtandard of orthodoxy, they muſt either ſtifle the ſpirit of Free Inquiry, which they had revived with ſuch remarkable ſucceſs, or they muſt introduce inſincere Subſcription. Free Inquiry unavoidably produces diverſity of ſentiments. The deſire of doing good, the natural attachment to the Church in which we have been educated, and even the hardſhip of an excluſion from the Miniſtry in it, may occaſion a wiſh to reconcile private opinion with the deciſions of public authority. Hence the origin of a latitude in Subſcription; which being unauthoriſed by any public allowance, is apt to diſcredit the Miniſters of Religion, and to produce many unedifying conſequences.

But with all their failings, our Reformers were a venerable ſet of men, and deſerve to be claſſed among the principal benefactors of Mankind. Conſidering the great diſadvantages they laboured under, we find their religious ſyſtem as free from errors as we could reaſonably expect. Learning was but lately reſtored,

reſtored; and ſtill more lately applied to clear the difficulties of the Bible. Something muſt be allowed to the prejudices of their education, and more perhaps to their accommodation to the prejudices of the age they lived in. Let theſe favourable conceſſions be made in the fulleſt extent; but let not a ſuperſtitious reverence for their characters ſuppreſs the cleareſt dictates of our own underſtanding. The compilers of our Articles, not content to eſtabliſh the fundamental truths of the Goſpel, require our aſſent to a ſyſtem of dark anddiſputable metaphyſics; in which, among many obſcure propoſitions more likely to raiſe doubts than to ſatisfy them, there are ſome doctrines ſo hardly reconcilable to Scripture or Reaſon, that no candid Churchman at this time will undertake their defence. Who can doubt but Religion is better underſtood now, than it was two hundred years ago? But to what purpoſe have we ſtudied the immortal writings of Locke and Clarke, if we be ſtill unwilling to remove the ſcholaſtic rubbiſh of the ſixteenth century? What other conſequence can we expect from ſuch timidity or diſingenuity, but to prolong the reign of ſuperſtition over weak minds, while men of more intelligence proceed from ſuſpecting their teacher's Veracity, to doubt the truth of the Goſpel itſelf.

THE advocates of our religious eſtabliſhment, prudently declining the plea of its exact conformity with Scripture, ſeem willing to reſt their cauſe on its utility to the State. § In their account, the plan of the Reforming Clergy is big with political miſchief. Without the fence of an explanatory Teſt, the

§ See Dr. Balguy's Charge.

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nation muſt be expoſed to the irruption of *Abſurdity*, *Confuſion*, and *Irreligion*. Remove the Articles, and notwithſtanding the divinity of Scripture, we ſhall ſoon ſee the return of fanatical extravagance, in all its frightful forms of impurity, inſanity, and rebellion; 'till at laſt, the common ſenſe of mankind, ſhocked by the abſurdity and wickedneſs of Enthuſiaſm, will renounce Religion, and embrace Atheiſm itſelf. Such are the ſuppoſed dangers to Civil Society from Subſcription to the word of God alone.

But it will not be denied, that Reaſon ſupported by Scripture is ſufficiently able to expoſe and diſcredit fanatical abſurdity; nor yet, that the ſeverity of penal Laws is the proper check to controul fanatical violence. In ages of darkneſs and ignorance, in times of national Revolution, when the minds of men are heated, and the hands of government are feeble, in ſuch unhappy circumſtances fanaticiſm will riſe to diſturb the world, in ſpite of human teſts, and the ſtill ſtronger ſecurity of the Bible. But in an enlightened age, and under a government of ſuch ſtrength and ſtability as ours, to apprehend ſuch fatal miſchief from Subſcription to the Bible only, is a viſionary, panic terror. Having premiſed this general obſervation, let us proceed to a more particular examination of this political argument.

1. Religion is uſeful to the State in proportion to the Sincerity with which it is received. But Infidelity and Hypocriſy are always in ſome degree the concomitants of Superſtition. The follies with which the ignorant are pleaſed, diſguſt men of ſenſe and education; who either openly reject the popular Religion

Religion or comply with it insincerely. In Popish countries the established absurdities are so gross and shocking, that the upper ranks of men, judging hardly of the Gospel from this deformed representation of it, are equally irreligious and profligate. In France, and still more in Italy, the centre of Superstition, this effect is visible. But we need not travel so far for a confirmation of this remark. Is not something of the same unhappy nature observable at home? Not in an equal degree, it shall be readily acknowledged. But that Religion is losing its hold upon the minds of men is too evident to be denied. For though we have renounced the Superstition of Rome in the most palpable instances; yet still our Church is far from being unexceptionable. Our mode of Faith and Worship has long been the subject of complaint with the most candid persons of our communion. Retaining a set of Articles, which the greatest part of our Clergy is known to disapprove, gives our establishment the air and appearance of a mere political engine. This is the constant objection of unbelievers; and when these suspicions prevail, even that secondary end of Religion cannot be attained. It becomes therefore every day more necessary, for the welfare of the State as well as the interest of Religion, to review our national Confession of Faith, and to reduce it to the plain and undisputed doctrines of genuine Christianity. This necessity our opponents themselves in part admit. || But whenever the emendation of the Articles shall be seriously

|| An application to the Bishops, for an *Amendment* of our public forms, proposed by the Rev. Francis Wollaston and other respectable Clergymen, probably will not take place; the Bishops having expressed their disapprobation of the measure, *at this time.*

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undertaken, the compilation of a new explanatory ſyſtem, liable to no material objections, will be found a work of great difficulty. The opinions of learned men on the diſputed points of Theology, are branched out into a thouſand variations and ſubdiviſions. To effect a coalition of theſe diſcordant opinions is neither practicable nor neceſſary. For while Chriſtians agree in thoſe few plain, but important truths in which the Religion of Chriſtianity conſiſts, their variations in what may be termed the philoſophy of Chriſtianity, may be endured without much inconvenience. To eſtabliſh the preſent faſhionable tenets, and to reprobate and reject the reſt, will only create other male-contents, and hereafter produce a new growth of inſincerity. Since then the neceſſity of *ſome* Reformation is acknowledged, and the favourite plan of *alterations* is at beſt but a palliative remedy, of difficult application and of uncertain ſucceſs; the latitude of Subſcription to the Bible only appears to be the eaſieſt, the moſt certain and effectual antidote to the ſpreading evils of Inſincerity and Irreligion.

2. Religion is more politically uſeful, as it is more exempt from diviſions. To prevent the evil conſequences of diſſentions, and to ſecure the peace of the Church, Politicians have uſually employed force, or intereſt. Force, attacking the fears of Mankind, is the more effectual method of reſtraint, but

Their inclination to encourage any propoſal which, *in their opinion*, tends to improve Religion, cannot be doubted. But the obvious and unavoidable difficulty of an *Alteration* of the Articles might poſſibly intimidate the venerable Bench. By a ſlight change in the form of Subſcription, this objection might eaſily be got over. A permiſſion to ſubſcribe the 39 Articles ſo far as they agree with Holy Scripture would ſatisfy the Petitioners, and put an end to all farther Diſputes on the ſubject of Subſcription.

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it is evidently unjuſt. Intereſt works on our hopes in a more ſilent inoffenſive way, but with leſs vigour or ſucceſs. If the right of private Judgement continue undiſturbed, no art, no influence can bring our opinions to an exact uniformity. But peace and outward union, the great objects of political care, are not unattainable. There is ſtill another reſource untried, as effectual as compulſion, and more unexceptionable than intereſt. Force is diſclaimed; diſclaim intereſt too. Inſtead of attempting by the weight of an eſtabliſhment to prevent the riſe of controverſies, endeavour to abate their rancour; aboliſh little narrow diſtinctions, throw the gates of the Church open, and teach contending ſects candidly to unite in the ſame external bond of Communion; from the experience of two centuries we learn how dangerous it is to define. The ſubtle diſcuſſions of artificial Theology have only multiplied diſputes; and if not removed from our national Creed, can ſerve no better end than to make thoſe diſputes perpetual. Has not the rigour of our eſtabliſhment excluded multitudes of pious and learned chriſtians; and yet, notwithſtanding the curious definitions of our Articles, is there not as great and notorious a diverſity of religious ſentiments within the Church, as the moſt generous latitude could poſſibly produce? The bitterneſs of religious debates is proverbially known; and the promiſcuous Subſcription of men of contrary ſentiments is a fact which, as it proves the utter inexpedience of the Articles, furniſhes angry diſputants likewiſe with an everlaſting fund of reproach. But if intereſt were detached from this or that train of religious opinion, we ſhould ſoon ſee Divines ſupport their diſputes with the temper and moderation of Philoſophers. The Calviniſt and Arminian, the Arian and Athanaſian would gradually for-

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get their antient animoſities; and the unhappy diſtinctions of our religious parties would be finally melted down in the general denomination of Chriſtians.

3. Religion is more beneficial to ſociety as it is more rationally underſtood. But ſurely, equal impartiality to all the various interpretations of Scripture, muſt be favourable to the diſcovery of Truth. Men are always more apt to defend, than to examine eſtabliſhed poſitions; and many groſs errors and ſuperſtitious practices have maintained their ground in an old creed or liturgy, which, but for their ſupport, muſt ſoon have diſappeared. The Chriſtian Religion indeed is an inſtitution ſo friendly in its deſign, and confirmed by ſuch invincible proofs, that far from being improper partiality, it was the moſt judicious act of charity to mankind to provide for the ſupport of its teachers. But though every ſerious perſon muſt heartily approve the general eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity; equal reaſon doth not appear, for eſtabliſhing thoſe diſputed tenets with which our Articles abound. Revelation would be extremely diſcredited, by aſſerting, that in things neceſſary to Salvation, it leaves mankind ſtill in doubt, what is the Will of God. Conſiſtent Chriſtians muſt allow, that in all the ſubſtantial parts of Religion, the Goſpel is plain and clear. A general acknowledgement of the truth of Scripture then, is a ſufficient ſecurity given by the teacher to the State, that whatever is indiſpenſably neceſſary, either in Faith or Practice, will be ſincerely taught. But there is neither the ſame weight nor the ſame evidence in thoſe conteſted doctrines. No man to whom the Goſpel is fairly propoſed, can ſafely reject it. But it contains

tains many obſcure paſſages, about the meaning of which our opinions may innocently vary. In certain abſtruſe points, the interpretations of Arminius or Calvin, may be erroneous; ‡ but if we admit that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, we hold the ſum and ſubſtance of the Faith, and thoſe erroneous notions cannot affect our Salvation. In that ſingle propoſition the eſſentials of our holy Religion are virtually involved. The belief of a God and a future State; the neceſſity of repentance and reformation of life, are all ſo evidently connected with it, that notwithſtanding the infinite diſputes among Chriſtians, thoſe doctrines have been invariably received in every age of the Church. And whatever errors we may fall into, through ignorance, negligence or prejudice, our ſincere belief, with a ſuitable practice, in thoſe fundamental Articles of Religion, will be accepted by God. In matters of doubtful interpretation therefore, what the diſciple may ſafely believe, the teacher may ſafely be permitted to teach. But in theſe diſputable caſes, deciſion is not only unneceſſary, it is prejudicial to truth. It tends to increaſe Bigotry, and in common eſteem to raiſe things indifferent to equal rank with the moſt important duties. It checks free examination; it nouriſhes implicit credulity; and by oppoſing intereſt to conſcience, and the authoriry of the Church to the love of truth, it conſecrates and perpetuates eſtabliſhed abſurdity. And even ſhould we admit, that nothing is ever received or ſupported by any Chriſtian ſociety, but what appears to it ſtrictly conſonant to Scripture, yet as error is manifold, and truth ſingle and uniform, it is poſſible every

‡ See Mr. Locke's Eſſay on the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, and Dr. Clarke's Diſcourſe on the Fundamentals of our Religion.

ſect of Chriſtians, in ſome points, may be miſtaken; but it is evident not more than one can be right in all. The influence of ſyſtematical eſtabliſhments therefore operates moſt extenſively in favour of the continuation of error.

Theſe arguments for a Repeal of our Articles appear concluſive. Well meaning but timorous perſons however may object the danger of Innovation. It is impoſſible to foreſee all the effects of the propoſed alteration. The miſchievous conſequences of it, which are yet unknown and undiſcoverable, may much exceed the evils of our preſent eſtabliſhment. Prudent Politicians, therefore, *in their days* will guard againſt Innovation.—But the preſent miſchief is great and increaſing; the remedy propoſed is eaſy and ſimple, of known efficacy, and of no apparent hazard. In ſuch a caſe, if a vague idea of danger, if a bare poſſibility of future inconvenience is to be conſidered as a ſolid and rational objection to the plan of the petitioners, why then farewel to all farther improvement in human ſociety.

But in ſtrict propriety of ſpeech, the abolition of human Articles of Faith, as terms of admiſſion to the Teacher's office, is not an innovation; it is the removal of an innovation which has proved very detrimental to our Holy Religion. Chriſtianity certainly flouriſhed moſt in the primitive ages, when ſyſtematical Teſts of orthodoxy where abſolutely unknown. Now if without the aid of human Articles, and under the greateſt external diſadvantages, the internal peace and purity of the Church were better preſerved before the Council of Nice, than in any ſucceeding age, why ſhould the latitude of interpretation

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tion allowed to Chriſtian Teachers then, be thought dangerous now to Religion, or to the State? The Goſpel would be more ably defended by Miniſters who were diſencumbered with human ſyſtems: and by removing every badge of partial diſtinction, which ſeparates Proteſtants on points of doubtful diſputation, the State would be no longer expoſed to the dangers of religious faction. The obſcuritics of Scripture in matters of inferior conſequence, will always produce diverſities of opinion. The various interpreters of Scripture have their peculiar notions, and will always have their reſpective followers. But ſince theſe pecularities are all conſiſtent with the great ends of Religion and Government, it is impolitic to give an excluſive preference to any particular ſyſtem of interpretation. Unmerited diſqualifications are ſure to diſguſt; and the animoſity of almoſt every religious faction which has diſturbed the chriſtian world, may be truly imputed to the impoſition of diſcriminating teſts of faith. Since then the difference between Proteſtants is not great, let the diſtinction be taken away, and the difference itſelf will not long remain; at leaſt, the diſguſt and alienation, which are by much the worſt part of the difference, will immediately diſappear. The exerciſe of human authority in matters of faith is the diſſenters grand objection to our eſtabliſhment. Let then the Goſpel *alone* be the teſt of our faith, and not a human comment upon the Goſpel, and a general reconciliation with our reſpectable brethren muſt ſoon take place. An eſtabliſhment built on this comprehenſive plan would unite in its defence every candid and rational Proteſtant in the kingdom. By their united efforts the riſe of fanaticiſm would eaſily be checked; and the National Church, reinforced by this additional ſtrength would be effectually ſecured

cured againſt any future inroad of Popery, ‡ its only natural and irreconcileable enemy.

Other objections to this plan of Reformation proceed from perſonal diſeſteem and diſtruſt of the Propoſers. It has been ſaid, they are an inconſiderable body of obſcure and indiſcreet perſons. And indeed this allegation can hardly be diſputed. At leaſt, it muſt be owned, there is little appearance of worldly wiſdom in the attempt of theſe Reformers. But notwithſtanding their confeſſed indiſcretion, and the mediocrity of their ſtations, their complaint is heard with increaſing attention. The merits of the cauſe itſelf, and not the number and dignity of its advocates will determine the judgment of the ſincere Chriſtian; the ſound policy of the meaſure, if it can be ſhewn in a ſatisfactory light, will regulate the conduct of the upright ſtateſman; and even the politician, who eſtimates civil prudence by arithmetical computation, may be gained hereafter by the growing approbation and ſupport of the public.

It has been ſaid, the Reforming Clergy are diſaffected to the Church. To thoſe who are ſtill inclined to admit this ſuſpicion, they proteſt with all ſincerity, that they reſpect the perſons and office of the Biſhops, and they revere the eſtabliſhed Church. Their cordial approbation of the uſe of a Liturgy, and their chearful ſubmiſſion to the eſtabliſhed form of Church-

‡ A coalition of Proteſtants is not impoſſible; becauſe it is not impoſſible but Proteſtants may be conſiſtent enough to allow diverſities of opinion in Miniſters of the ſame Church. But no re-union of Popery with our Church, or with any other Proteſtant Church can poſſibly take place, without an entire ſubmiſſion to the Popiſh claims of ſpiritual Supremacy, and infallible authority; that is, without a renunciation of the *eſſential* principles of the Proteſtant Religion.

Government

Government, have been repeatedly declared. † Their endeavours to clear the Church from every reaſonable objection are ſurely not inconſiſtent with theſe declarations. If the Liturgy and the Articles ſometimes ſpeak the ſame metaphyſical jargon, the natural conſequence of diſmiſſing the Articles will be, a correſpondent change in the Liturgy. The purpoſe of general edification requires, that in a form of public worſhip nothing abſtruſe or unintelligible to common Chriſtians ſhould be admitted. The language of Creeds and Prayers ſhould be plain and ſimple, and free from every mixture of doubtful ſpeculation. And if every ſcholaſtic expreſſion, every expreſſion that ſpeaks not the general ſenſe of Scripture, but the peculiar ſenſe of a ſingle ſect of Chriſtians, were expunged from our Service, the Liturgy, which is now a very pious and affecting compoſition, would then be perhaps a perfect model of Chriſtian worſhip. It is humbly hoped, theſe alterations may be made without giving juſt offence. The ill effect produced by ſome indefenſible paſſages in the Liturgy and Articles, was not unobſerved in Tillotſon's time; from the concurrence of various cauſes, it is more ſeverely felt in ours; and they who have the credit of our Church, or the honour of Chriſtianity at heart, have reaſon to extend the wiſh of that wiſe and generous Archbiſhop.

† In the writings of the Petitioning Clergy, and by a Reſolution paſſed at a general meeting, previous to the preſentation of the Petition to Parliament.

When the Friends of Freedom in the laſt [illegible] Toleration of Diſſenters, the Danger of being [illegible] religious Factions ſeemed almoſt an inſuperable [illegible] Happily the Objection was over-ruled; and the conſequence has fully ſatisfied the Nation, that in that Caſe Juſtice and Policy were coincident. If the Attempt which is now making, to free our Church from Human Impoſition, and to compleat the unfiniſhed work of Reformation, ſhould meet with the Succeſs it merits, the Sincerity of our Clergy would be vindicated, religious Animoſities would be calmed, and rational Religion would be gradually and continually advanced. At laſt, Experience would convince thoſe, who cannot be convinced by Argument, that Truth and General Utility are indeed inſeparable.

FINIS.